

# IOWA BIRD LIFE

PUBLISHED QUARTERLY BY THE

## IOWA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION

VOL. VII

JUNE, 1937

NO. 2



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The Iowa Ornithologists' Union was organized at Ames, Iowa, February 28, 1923, for the study and protection of native birds and to promote fraternal relations among Iowa bird students.

The central design of the Union's official seal is the Eastern Goldfinch, designated State Bird of Iowa in 1933.

Publications of the Union: Mimeographed letters, 1923-1928; "The Bulletin," 1929-1930; "Iowa Bird Life," beginning 1931.

**SUBSCRIPTION RATES:** In Iowa, \$1.00 a year (includes membership dues). Outside of Iowa, 50c a year. Special rate for all libraries, 50c a year. Single copies 15c each. (Keep the Editor informed of your correct address.)

EDITORIAL AND PUBLICATION OFFICE  
WINTHROP, IOWA

## NOTES ON THE NESTING OF THE BALD EAGLE IN ALLAMAKEE COUNTY, IOWA

By ELLISON ORR

WAUKON, IOWA

Post is the southwest township in Allamakee County, and the little river to which the French traders and voyageurs gave the name of "Le Jaun Riviere,"—the Yellow River—flows easterly across the north row of sections. Along where was once the "Myron Mills" the bluffs on the north side of the river rise steeply for 200 feet with quite noticeable precipices at their crests. On the face of one of these on the southeast "forty" of Section 4 is a pocket or small cave, six feet wide, two feet high and extending back into the Galena limestone rock of the cliff a little deeper than it is high.

When the pioneer who "entered" the land built his log cabin just across the river to the south, the nest of a white-tailed eagle was in this cave. The grandson of this pioneer told us that early in 1852 "when Grandpap Ewing settled there, the eagles had a nest in the cave in the cliff." Grandma Ewing in later years, when in a reminiscent mood, would tell of the eagles' nest on the cliff near their cabin, and that her husband shot them because they were carrying off their chickens. (This would be either in 1852 or 1853.)

Once (about 1885) we climbed up to the nest, to find in it an armful of dry red cedar limbs, some of which were more than an inch thick. These were part of the old nest. Probably many generations of the "bird of our country" had first looked out on the wild country below from that pocket in the cliff.

Near the quarter-section corner between Sections 9 and 16 in Hanover Township—T. 99, R. 6 west—in Allamakee, there stood an old red oak that towered above the surrounding, and by no means dwarfed, primeval forest in the early Fifties when the first settlers came. In the top of this tree was an eagle's nest.

The son of a pioneer Norwegian settler, who is still living, told us of this old nest, which they could see from their cabin a mile away, across the Upper Iowa River valley. He said, "the nest was as big as a hog'shead," and that it was occupied for ten years after they came in 1854. This would make 1864 the year in which in all probability the last nesting of the Bald Eagle in Allamakee County occurred. The old eagles, he said, raised their young chiefly on a diet of fish which they caught in the nearby river.

Near the Norwegian family lived two other families of pioneer settlers whose men-folk were more hunters than farmers. Many a haunch of venison they brought to the desperately poor Norwegians who could not afford a gun. Too many settlers came, however, and the hunter-farmers moved on. But before leaving they persuaded a dare-devil young neighbor to climb the old tree and get for them the two young eagles then in the nest. To do this he had to dig through the nest which, because of its size, he could not get over. In doing this a number of dried fish were found in the rubbish and thrown down. After a few days of confinement the eaglets died.

On the state line between Minnesota and Iowa, on Waterloo Creek which flows south across Waterloo Township (the northwest township in Allamakee County), is the village of Bee, so called because the surveying party which ran the line between the two states camped there in the valley for a time and found many bee trees near by. Just below Bee in the days of the settlement was a cluster of old white pines in one of which was an eagle's nest.

Not far away in Minnesota lived a pioneer bachelor Yankee who, while out hunting one day, shot the sitting eagle. This pioneer afterwards became our neighbor, and this was the story that he told us 60 years ago. He said:

"I shot the old bird off the nest with my rifle but did not kill her. She came tumbling through the branches and hit the ground with a thump. Tige, my dog, a big ornery brute, rushed in to finish her, but she just natchely reached out, quicker'n lightning, and grabbed him by the snoot." Tige did some howling, he said,—there was no fight in him—till his master killed the bird and pried the talons loose.

This is the brief record of the Bald Eagle's nesting in Allamakee County. Along down the years since that time the bird has been but a transient caller, his visits being further and further apart as time passed, till now the sight of one is good for an item in the local papers.

I remember seeing two Bald Eagles sitting near each other in a tree on the sheltered side of a grove, soaking up the warm sunshine, one winter morning in about 1898. Perhaps ten years later, at Waukon Junction, I saw six Bald Eagles together, circling over the flood plain of the Mississippi River. Old Jim Hancock, a fisherman, said they lived on the worthless fish that were thrown away when the fishermen drew their nets.

And now—on November 18, 1936, while walking up the railroad along the foot of the bluffs three miles north of Harpers Ferry, my companion called my attention to a large bird wheeling high overhead. As it circled we could see the glint of the sun on its white tail and I knew that again, after many years, I was seeing an eagle. As it wheeled it drifted away into the haze to the southwest. We watched it till it became a mere speck—and then it was gone.



THE EAGLE NEST CLIFF

On the north side of Yellow River in Post Township, Allamakee County, Iowa. The pocket cave in which the Bald Eagle once nested is a little above the center of the picture. Remnants of the old nest could still be seen when this photograph was taken fifty years ago.

## THE CEDAR FALLS CONVENTION

By KATE E. LA MAR

Sec'y-Treasurer, Iowa Ornithologists' Union

The fifteenth annual meeting of the Iowa Ornithologists' Union was called to order by the President, M. L. Jones, in the Gilchrist Chapel of Iowa State Teachers College, Cedar Falls, at 9:20 a. m., May 7, 1937. Dr. E. J. Cable, head of the Natural Science department of the college, gave an address of welcome, to which President Jones responded. Dr. Cable's address was most interesting and touched upon the natural resources of Iowa and the way they have been destroyed, with hints as to how the public can help to restore them.

The first paper on the program was Rev. Mark Shockey's "Observations Made on Unusual Birds Around Waterloo," in which he told very interestingly of various birds found during the previous year. Dr. Hendrickson spoke on "Birds and Other Wild Life as Affected by Insect Epidemics and Control Measures." He said that burning fence rows destroys only a small portion of insect pests, but weather elements help to control them. Birds are of some help in fighting chinch bugs and grasshoppers, but considering the numbers in which the pests appear, birds cannot do the impossible. Study in the western part of Iowa showed that grasshoppers were eaten by Crows, English Sparrows, Kingbirds, Cuckoos and Screech Owls, and skunks, red foxes, hogs, cats and ground squirrels also ate the insects in some numbers.

James Harlan of the State Historical Department of Des Moines gave a taxidermy demonstration, using a domestic hen as a subject. He said that most of the pheasants he had mounted had broken bones from hunters' bullets, but in all cases these had been neatly mended by nature. Robert Wallace, son of Secretary of Agriculture Wallace, spoke very entertainingly of the birds he had observed in the Jackson Hole country of Wyoming, where he spent the previous summer. The forenoon session was closed with Dr. Warren Keck's talk on "The English Sparrow as an Experimental Bird." Dr. Keck has made some very interesting experiments with the sparrow, especially in regard to plumage changes he was able to secure by influencing the sex organs. Albinism and melanism were discussed; slides were used to illustrate his talk.

The noon luncheon was served in The Commons, on the college campus. After lunch Dr. Allen Stanley of the University of Iowa talked on the Marsh Hawk and gave the results of his studies of this species. This was followed by a very illuminating talk on "The Educational Possibilities in Our State Parks" by Mrs. MacMartin. Wesley Bartlett made a report on the work of the Fairfield banding station during 1936-37. He made a similar report at our meeting last year; he banded 28 species of birds during the year, and 65 species since 1931. Arthur Palas read a paper entitled "Are We in Tune?" in which was told very convincingly what happens when the balance of nature is tampered with.

"North American Waterfowl on the Wintering Grounds of Mexico" was the subject spoken on by Logan J. Bennett of the United States Biological Survey. Mr. Bennett went to Mexico during the winter season to study the Blue-winged Teal. His description of the area southwest of Mexico City where two or three thousand teal wintered was very interesting. C. E. Gillham, also of the Biological Survey, described the "Waterfowl Breeding Grounds of Canada," so that we had a very clear picture of waterfowl in their southern winter grounds and in their breeding range in the North. Mr. Gillham spent last summer in the far North, studying the nesting areas of ducks, of which he found where 19 species nested. He said that hunters' guns are responsible for the most destruction of ducks, but weather kills many. He thinks it is not necessary to worry about the wintering or breed-

ing zones of the ducks; it is the intermediate zone, over which the birds must migrate, where the worst destruction takes place.

In the absence of Dr. Roberts of Spirit Lake, Judge Thomas conducted the "Forum." Each person present had the opportunity to relate his most interesting bird experience of the past year or anything else that he wished to speak of. Many interesting observations were brought out, as well as worth-while discussion. The business meeting closed the afternoon session. Reports by the various officers were made and accepted. The officers elected were as given on the title page of this issue. Dr. Keck, in behalf of the Cedar Rapids Bird Club, invited the Union to hold its next convention in Cedar Rapids, and President Jones read telegrams from the Chamber of Commerce, Montrose Hotel and others in Cedar Rapids, seconding the Bird Club's invitation. The invitation was formally accepted. Dr. Hendrickson commended the good work done by 'Iowa Bird Life' and Editor Pierce was asked to speak briefly to the group. After a general discussion of how to spread the organization over more productive fields through Boy Scout and Campfire Girls work, the afternoon session was adjourned.

The banquet was held in The Commons at 6:30 p. m. Mr. Rosene was toastmaster and he called on the past presidents who were present for brief talks. The evening program was continued in Gilchrist Chapel. Mrs. MacMartin showed a series of colored moving pictures on birds and wild flowers of Iowa. Kate LaMar described the National Audubon Society Nature Camp on Muscongus Bay, Maine, which she attended last summer, and illustrated her talk with moving pictures made by the Audubon Society. Mr. Rosene closed the evening meeting with a talk entitled "Nature Speaks"—a beautiful tribute to the outdoors and the inspiration that it can give.

The field trip of Saturday forenoon, May 8, was finished at Spring Park in Cedar Falls, where a picnic lunch was served by the local Nature League. Here the complete list of birds was compiled after the lunch.

**Resolutions.**—Your Resolutions Committee recommends for adoption the following—

That we express our appreciation to the Nature League of Cedar Falls and Beta Beta Beta Fraternity Chapter for the excellent arrangements and entertainment furnished for our annual meeting; that we also express our appreciation to officers and faculty of Iowa State Teachers College, and especially to Dr. Winifred Gilbert, for the hospitality we have enjoyed.

That we desire to express our feeling of deep loss at the death of a former member, our beloved Dr. B. Shimeck, feeling that the wild-life of Iowa has seen the passing of one of its greatest interpreters and defenders.

That we commend the extension work done at Iowa State College in an endeavor to have the citizens of this state know our wildlife.

That our Union endorse the development and extension of a naturalists' service in many of our state parks for the development of a greater appreciation of our natural heritage and its conservation.

That we are appreciative of the work of the officers of the Union, and especially of the high standard to which our Editor, Fred Pierce, has developed our magazine, 'Iowa Bird Life.'

(Signed) Arthur J. Palas  
O. S. Thomas  
J. Wilbur Dole

**Attendance Register.**—AFTON, Mrs. Henry Carolus; AMES, Mr. and Mrs. Logan Bennett, Dr. Paul Errington, C. E. Gillham, Dr. and Mrs. G. O. Hendrickson, Laura M. Moffett, Robt. Wallace, Chas. Yocom,

ANAMOSA, Miss Harriet Cunningham; CEDAR FALLS, Mrs. W. O. Abram, John Bliese, Sylvia Bogh, Hugh S. Buffum, Mrs. Burdick, Dr. E. J. Cable, Rhea Disney, Mrs. Ray Dix, Dr. Winifred Gilbert, Dr. M. L. Grant, Mabel Honan, Lyle Kenyon, Dr. Lantz, Emmet Polderboer, Bob Porter, Clara Rath, Mrs. R. M. Rugg, Mrs. Winifield Scott; CEDAR HEIGHTS, Mrs. Evans, Mrs. Littrell; CEDAR RAPIDS, Miss C. Esther Copp, Mrs. C. C. Flodin, Dr. Warren Keck, Mrs. E. J. Petranek, Miss Lillian Serbousek, Miss Myra Willis; CENTRAL CITY, Mr. and Mrs. Walter Pike; DES MOINES, James Harlan, Miss Kate LaMar, Miss Olivia McCabe, Mrs. R. J. Thornburg; DUBUQUE, Edith Fisher, E. A. Hemsley, Mr. and Mrs. R. W. Johnson, Miss Margaret Kohlman, Miss Mary Young; FAIRFIELD, Wesley Bartlett, J. Wilbur Dole, Malcolm McDonald; GRUNDY CENTER, Mrs. J. R. King, Mrs. Jennie Meyers; INDEPENDENCE, Bernard Holgate, Mrs. W. M. Woodward; IOWA CITY, Dr. Risley, Dr. Allen Stanley, Miss Dorothy Thompson; OGDEN, W. M. Rosene; POMEROY, Mr. and Mrs. M. L. Jones; POSTVILLE, A. J. Palas; ROCK RAPIDS, Mr. and Mrs. O. S. Thomas; SUMNER, Miss Margaret Murley; TAMA, Mrs. J. G. Ennis, Mrs. W. G. MacMartin, Mrs. C. J. Wonser; VALLEY JUNCTION, Mr. and Mrs. W. A. Kinnaid; WATERLOO, Mabel Bailey, Mrs. J. W. Barlow, Lillian Maxwell, Harvey Nichols. Rev. Mark Shockey, Wanda Wilharm; WEBSTER, Mrs. May Jones; WINTHROP, Mr. and Mrs. F. J. Pierce.

**Birds Seen on the Field Trip.**—Cedar Heights, Casebeer Heights, Fisher and Spring Lakes regions in Black Hawk County; marsh area near New Hartford in Butler County; May 8, about 6 a. m. to 12.

Eared Grebe (Nichols), Pied-billed Grebe, Double-crested Cormorant, Great Blue, Green and Black-crowned Night Herons, Am. Bittern, Mallard, Pintail, Green-winged and Blue-winged Teals, Shoveller, Ring-necked, Canvas-back, Scaup and Ruddy Ducks, Sharp-shinned, Cooper's, Red-tailed, Red-shouldered, Marsh and Sparrow Hawks, Rough-legged Hawk (Hendrickson), Duck Hawk (Wallace), Bob-white, Ring-necked Pheasant, King and Sora Rails, Yellow Rail (McDonald, Wallace, Yocom), Am. Coot, Killdeer, Wilson's Snipe, Spotted, Solitary and Pectoral Sandpipers, Greater and Lesser Yellow-legs, Forster's and Black Terns, Mourning Dove, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Great Horned Owl, Whippoorwill, Nighthawk, Chimney Swift, Belted Kingfisher, Flicker, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Red-bellied, Red-headed, Hairy and Downy Woodpeckers, Kingbird, Crested and Least Flycatchers, Phoebe, Wood Pewee, Prairie Horned Lark, Tree, Bank, Rough-winged and Barn Swallows, Purple Martin, Blue Jay, Crow, Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, Brown Creeper, House and Prairie Marsh Wrens, Mockingbird, Catbird, Brown Thrasher, Robin, Wood, Hermit, Olive-backed, Gray-cheeked and Willow Thrushes, Bluebird, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Golden-crowned Kinglet (Thomas), Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Cedar Waxwing, Migrant Shrike, Starling, Yellow-throated, Blue-headed, Red-eyed and Warbling Vireos, Black and White, Blue-winged, Tenn., Orange-crowned, Nashville, Parula, Yellow, Magnolia, Cape May, Myrtle, Black-throated Green, Blackburnian, Chestnut-sided, Bay-breasted, Blackpoll, Pine, Palm, Mourning, Wilson's and Canada Warblers, Golden-winged Warbler (Shockey), Worm-eating Warbler (Bliese), Ovenbird, Grinnell's and Louisiana Water-thrushes, Northern Yellowthroat, Redstart, English Sparrow, Bobolink, Eastern and Western Meadowlarks, Yellow-headed and Red-winged Blackbirds, Baltimore Oriole, Bronzed Grackle, Cowbird, Scarlet Tanager, Cardinal, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Indigo Bunting, Dickcissel, Purple Finch, Goldfinch, Towhee, Savannah, Grasshopper, Leconte's, Vesper, Lark, Tree, Chipping, Clay-colored, Field, Harris's, White-crowned, White-throated, Lincoln's, Swamp and Song Sparrows. Total, 150 species.

## BIRD-BANDING (PART II)

By MR. AND MRS. M. L. JONES

POMEROY, IOWA

If one is interested in trapping for great numbers, he would do well to work with the sparrows, which are more readily trapped in the fall, especially in a dry season. Baits we have used to trap sparrows are: water, cracked grain, bird seed and sweepings from hayloft or mill. Of all baits, we have found the water most effective. A small pan of water seems to be quite attractive to the sparrows, but that same pool of water constantly agitated by a drip seems irresistible.

For example, on November 10, 1935 (a cold, windy and cloudy day with the temperature ranging between 26 and 30), even though icicles formed on the drips, we captured 102 individuals. We nearly froze our hands while placing bands on 84 Tree Sparrows which had been attracted to the traps almost wholly by water. (A Fox Sparrow was also banded on this date.) The water thus attracted the birds in spite of the fact that our banding operations took place within a hundred yards of a lake.

While the sparrows compose over one-half of all the birds which we have banded, they furnish less than one-third of our repeats and only one-sixteenth of the returns.

Almost all of our summer banding activities have been made possible by using water as bait. To keep this water agitated, a one-gallon screw-top can is placed some distance above the trap. Into the screw-top is soldered a one-eighth-inch brass tube. In operation the end of the tube is fitted with a plug whittled from basswood (other woods have not proved satisfactory). This can be so regulated that the water will drop steadily at the desired rate.

The following varieties of birds which we had not taken at any previous time were attracted to the water drips during the extreme heat of last summer (1936): Wood Thrush, 10; Indigo Bunting, 2; Towhee, 1; Cardinal, 5; Black-billed Cuckoo, 2; Yellow-billed Cuckoo, 6; Red-eyed Vireo, 2; Hummingbird, 1; Phoebe, 1. The usual run of Robins, Catbirds, etc., was also taken. On July 12 we captured 55 birds made up of 15 varieties, three of which we had never taken before. During the month of July we banded a total of 249 individuals—27 varieties. Catbirds quite readily respond to bathing and drinking facilities; in fact, they almost become a pest especially if one locates a group of traps in the hope of capturing a Cardinal or Wood Thrush.

Of those birds which occur in fairly large numbers, the Robin is the most interesting to trap. Out of 249 Robins banded we have had 76 repeats and 11 returns, one a foreign return from Texas. One of the first Robins we ever trapped was No. B-263135, banded October 9, 1933. It returned exactly one year later, almost to the hour. Another one, banded March 26, 1934, was recaptured within a half hour on the same day. It was not captured again until March 30 of the next year. On that day it entered the traps twice, repeating also on the following dates: March 31, April 13, 19, and May 22, 1935. "Old number 43" (C-333343) made herself very much at home in our traps. She was banded April 7, 1934, and repeated as follows: April 9, 9, 11, 16, 21, 26, and May 14, 14, 14, 21, the same season.

Judging from the questions asked, many people believe that we set our traps and then leave them for a few days or perhaps a week without releasing the birds. No bird-bander is permitted to do this even if he so desired. Most birds are of an extremely nervous temperament and would not live twenty-four hours in a trap. Furthermore, the congregating of birds at traps invites the curiosity of stray cats and a few wild animals as well as shrikes. Because of this the traps should be visited at intervals of not less than two hours. When the birds are quite abundant we seldom leave them unattended more than an hour at a time. We have thus far used only that type of trap which cap-



tures one bird in a compartment. When the bird is captured the door keeps enemies out just as effectively as it keeps the bird in. Some traps are designed to capture birds in considerable numbers and work on the same principle as a funnel-type fly trap. These traps should be under almost constant observation, for a bird enemy can easily enter and destroy many at a time. Then, too, the culprit is usually smart enough to find its way out, or strong enough to force its way and be ready for the next "catch."

One may safely leave various types of traps baited and in the field for long periods of time if they are left with their exit or entrance door fastened securely in an open position. Thus the birds become accustomed to feeding or bathing within the trap, so that more may be captured in a week by actually trapping only one day than would be the case if they were repeatedly disturbed by constant trapping.

Many people think that a bird bander struggles along with a single trap. This is seldom the case, as some have equipment running into thousands of dollars. Our equipment is only average. If each cell of every trap contained one bird, our traps would probably hold 50 birds at one time; of course, this never happens, but we have taken 20 Tree Sparrows out of the traps on one complete round.

If you already have so many hobbies that you are neglecting some of them, don't get a banding permit for it could easily be made a full-time occupation. Some birds enter the traps to feed or bathe as early as five o'clock in the morning, while some of the thrushes are captured long after the sun goes down—as late as eight o'clock in the summer. If one is especially ambitious, night raids can be made with a flashlight and the birds plucked from corn shocks or evergreen trees. It is a laborious task, however, and the results are not usually sufficient to justify the effort except on cold, windy, or stormy nights. Most hobbies are only seasonal, but this one may be pursued at any time—no day is too cold; no day is too hot. On that day last winter (1936) when the mercury dipped to 30 below zero, we banded a woodpecker. Last July 12, while we sizzled in temperatures of 115, we banded 55 birds, comprising 15 varieties.

Banding is not all field work, however, for complete records must be kept of each individual bird. These records are kept in duplicate in our own files, and semi-annual reports are sent to the Biological Survey, as are reports of hundreds of other station operators. If any of our birds are captured by other people, they are reported to us through the Biological Survey. Many valuable records are lost by children and sometimes adults who, upon finding a banded bird either dead or alive, fail to report it at once to the Biological Survey at Washington, D. C.

	Banded	Repeat	Return
Rail, Va. ....	1	..	..
Coot .....	3	1	..
Bob-white .....	1	..	..
Dove, Mourning .....	6	..	..
Hawk, Sparrow .....	1	..	..
Owl, Screech .....	5	..	..
Owl, Great-horned .....	2	..	..
Cuckoo, Yellow-billed .....	6	..	..
Cuckoo, Black-billed .....	2	..	..
Woodpecker, Hairy .....	18	6	8
Woodpecker, Downy .....	29	39	9*
Woodpecker, Red-headed .....	22	3	3
Woodpecker, Red-bellied .....	5	..	1
Flicker .....	27	6	2
Nighthawk .....	1	..	..
Hummingbird, Ruby-thr. ....	2	..	..
Phoebe .....	1	..	..



	Banded	Repeat	Return
Lark, Prairie Horned .....	1	..	..
Jay, Blue .....	31	10	5*
Crow .....	1	..	1*
Starling .....	2	..	1†
Cowbird .....	1	..	..
Blackbird, Red-winged .....	22	1	..
Meadowlark, Eastern .....	7	..	..
Meadowlark, Western .....	2	..	..
Oriole, Baltimore .....	7	..	..
Blackbird, Rusty .....	1	..	..
Grackle, Bronzed .....	75	3	1†
Crossbill, Red .....	1	..	..
Goldfinch .....	11	1	..
Sparrow, Vesper .....	1	..	..
Sparrow, Savannah .....	5	..	..
Sparrow, Harris's .....	188	30	..
Sparrow, White-crowned .....	39	3	..
Sparrow, Gambel's .....	7	1	..
Sparrow, White-thr. ....	174	37	1*
Sparrow, Tree .....	340	9	..
Sparrow, Chipping .....	9	..	..
Sparrow, Clay-colored .....	5	1	..
Sparrow, Field .....	5	..	..
Junco, Slate-colored .....	393	76	1†
Sparrow, Song .....	226	26	..
Sparrow, Lincoln's .....	384	50	2*
Sparrow, Swamp .....	48	2	..
Sparrow, Fox .....	5	..	..
Towhee .....	3	..	..
Cardinal .....	5	..	..
Grosbeak, Rose-br. ....	13	1	..
Bunting, Indigo .....	3	..	..
Swallow, Cliff .....	3	..	..
Swallow, Barn .....	5	..	..
Shrike, Migrant .....	13	..	1*
Vireo, Red-eyed .....	2	..	..
Vireo, Phil. ....	2	..	..
Vireo, Warbling .....	2	..	..
Warbler, Nashville .....	10	..	..
Warbler, Orange-cr. ....	14	1	..
Warbler, Tennessee .....	1	..	..
Warbler, Myrtle .....	7	..	..
Ovenbird .....	1	..	..
Water-Thrush, Grinnell's .....	1	..	..
Water-Thrush, La. ....	1	..	..
Warbler, Conn. ....	2	..	..
Warbler, Mourning .....	9	..	..
Yellow-throat, Northern .....	49	9	..
Warbler, Wilson's .....	11	1	..
Redstart .....	2	..	..
Catbird .....	144	30	1
Thrasher, Brown .....	89	14	..
Wren, House .....	66	2	..
Wren, Winter .....	1	..	1†
Creeper, Brown .....	8	2	..
Nuthatch, White-br. ....	35	33	7
Nuthatch, Red-br. ....	1	..	..
Titmouse, Tufted .....	8	3	..
Chickadee .....	80	53	10
Kinglet, Ruby-cr. ....	11	..	..
Thrush, Wood .....	10	5	..

	Banded	Repeat	Return
Thrush, Willow .....	4	..	..
Thrush, Olive-b. ....	13	..	..
Thrush, Hermit .....	4	..	..
Robin .....	249	76	11*
Bluebird .....	4	..	..

\*Foreign return in group. A foreign return is a bird taken in another locality by someone other than the bandler.

† Found dead locally.

### RECENT BIRD BOOKS

AUDUBON: AN INTIMATE LIFE OF THE AMERICAN WOODSMAN, by Stanley Clisby Arthur (Harmanson, publisher, New Orleans, 1937; two editions, cloth, pp. 1-517, about 75 illustrations; price, DeLuxe ed., \$10, regular ed. \$5.)

Audubon is ever a glamorous character. The events of his life seem of a sort to appeal to the popular fancy. Book-length biographies and many magazine articles during recent years have kept him in the public eye and have made his life work familiar to a rapidly growing number of people. But what of Alexander Wilson, Audubon's contemporary who worked so hard to place American ornithology on a firm foundation? His life was not one to inspire the imaginations of writers, apparently. Audubon continues to receive the laurels, while poor Wilson, though not forgotten, remains an obscure personage.

This book will stir the enthusiasm of even the most casual Audubon admirer. For more than twenty years the author conducted extensive studies and researches in Audubonia. Family documents of all kinds, letters, journals and other material were turned over to him by Audubon's descendants and others who possessed them. Some of these documents had been withheld from the public and are now published for the first time. The foremost authorities in Audubonia also advised and helped the author. With this great store of data at his disposal, and possessed of an absorbing interest in his subject and pronounced ability as a narrator and descriptive artist, Mr. Arthur has given us the best and most comprehensive Audubon biography since Professor Herrick's book of two decades ago. Although similar in size and scope, the new material which Mr. Arthur has been able to uncover carries his book beyond the former biography. It is a new delineation of Audubon, though the story remains the same. Always an interesting story, when amplified by new matter and written in Mr. Arthur's engaging style, it is doubly so.

The events in Audubon's life are recorded in their regular sequence: His boyhood in France; the journey to America and his early home at Mill Grove on the Perkioming Creek; his growth to manhood and marriage to Lucy Bakewell; business enterprises in various places, most of which proved unsuccessful and finally left him nearly destitute; the meeting with Wilson in 1810, which could have resulted in an enduring friendship of great benefit to these two men of kindred tastes but didn't; and the inspiration that finally came to him and altered the course of his life—the determination to produce 'The Birds of America'. With a definite goal decided upon, Audubon at last found himself and the real struggle began. The years of work in searching America for the subjects of his brush and pen were not less arduous than the disheartening task of obtaining subscribers (for whom he canvassed personally both in America and Europe) to finance the very expensive publication. The venture was attempted in a day when population was small and interest in natural science was at a low ebb—a venture that would seem dubious even in the present day. Yet Audubon overcame all obstacles and after many years triumphed in his mammoth undertaking. There was only one Audubon. He is the character that Mr. Arthur portrays so vividly.

The discussion of Audubon's nativity and parentage—controversial matters which have never been settled satisfactorily—is an interesting

section of the book. Many believe that Audubon was the "Lost Dauphin," the son of the martyred Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette, who was spirited out of prison to safety during the French Revolution. The evidence in the case is clearly presented. But the documents unearthed by Professor Herrick, which seem to show that Audubon was born in San Domingo in the West Indies, are quite convincing. This part of Audubon's life will no doubt always be clouded in mystery. The period of Audubon's life which was spent in West Feliciana in Mr. Arthur's state, Louisiana, is covered very thoroughly in this book.—F. J. P.

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A MONOGRAPHIC STUDY OF THE RED CROSSBILL, by Ludlow Griscom (Boston Society of Natural History, Boston, 1937; wrappers, pp. 77-209; price, \$1.60).

The Red Crossbill has always been more or less an enigma to ornithologists. Its erratic wanderings over the country at various times of the year furnish a genuine puzzle. In a systematic study of the subspecies of this bird some very difficult problems are encountered. Students have believed that two separate subspecies have been found nesting or migrating in an area where only one should occur; and three or four different crossbills have apparently been found in one winter flock. These and other puzzling angles are carefully considered by the author, and the solution is presented in an understandable way. Using material gained through personal studies, and drawing upon the published data of American ornithologists through the years, in addition to making thorough examination of large series of crossbill skins to analyze subspecific variation, Mr. Griscom's treatment of the bird in all its forms is well-rounded and complete. Few notes on habits and life-history of the Red Crossbill are included. Most of the book is devoted to the classifying of subspecies with detailed discussion of reasons for such classification. After disposing of North American forms of the bird, the author continues with a similar study of Old World races.

In the section listing Iowa specimens of the Red Crossbill, DuMont's 'Revised List of the Birds of Iowa' is quoted. Mr. Griscom here seems very sure of himself. Although unable personally to examine any of DuMont's specimens of *bendirei*, he says that they are either *benti* or *pusilla*. For the student who is interested in subspecific determinations Mr. Griscom's scholarly treatise will be thoroughly interesting.—F. J. P.

\* \* \* \* \*

This issue of 'Iowa Bird Life' has 12 pages instead of 16 as planned because about 40 members have neglected to pay their dues for 1937. It is impossible to complete our printing schedule for the year until the money for dues is nearly all paid in. This has meant the omission of the General Notes section in this issue. With many valuable articles awaiting publication, a smaller magazine is to be regretted. If YOU are one of the 40, please let us hear from you promptly!

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